

**Bylaws
of the
West Virginia--Western Maryland Synod**

**2 June 2018
(as amended by the 2018 Synod Assembly)**

(Bylaw Section Numbers Coincide With Constitution Chapter Numbers)

Section I

Reserved For Future Use.

Section II

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Section III

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Section IV

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Section V

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Section VI

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Section VII

The Synod Assembly

B7.01. A notice of the time and place of the Synod Assembly shall be given to all pastors and to the readers of the Bishop's Road Show E-News at least sixty days before the opening day of the assembly.

B7.02. The secretary of the synod shall prepare in advance of any assembly the roster of the synod, delivering a copy thereof to the Committee on Registration and Attendance. The secretary shall list as voting members those persons whose credentials have been sent by the congregations. The official roster of registered delegates shall be closed at the end of the second business session.

B7.03. The bishop of synod shall appoint the following convention committees:

- Committee on the Bishop's Report
- Committee on Elections
- Committee on Minutes
- Committee on Reference and Counsel
- Committee on Registration and Attendance
- Committee on Resolutions
- Committee on Worship

B7.04. Every conference shall have the right to memorialize the assembly of this synod on any subject affecting the welfare of the church.

B7.05. Every congregation shall have the right to petition the assembly of this synod on subjects affecting its own welfare and legitimate interests.

B7.06. There shall be a division between the voting members and the others on the assembly floor which shall be indicated by a marker(s). Voting members and those persons accorded privilege of seat and voice shall seat themselves in the section in front of the marker(s). All others shall be seated behind the marker(s).

B7.07. When a voting member is unable to serve, the alternate voting member shall be seated when the Committee on Registration and Attendance has been provided with the necessary information and the alternate has been given a voting member's card.

B7.08. All retired ordained ministers on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members provided that the voting membership of the Assembly is still 60% laypersons.

B7.09. Each voting member, or those persons accorded the privilege of seat and voice, when recognized by the chair, shall state his or her name, congregation or the institution or group he or she represents. Persons speaking from the floor shall use the floor microphones (if they are provided) and shall address and speak to the chair. Speeches by an individual voting member, or a person with the privilege of voice, shall be limited to five minutes on each assembly issue. Speakers may speak a second time on the same issue, but only after all others desiring to speak have been given opportunity to do so. Those speaking a second time shall be limited to three minutes of rebuttal.

B7.10. All motions, resolutions, amendments and nominations shall be submitted in writing and on proper forms available from the secretary of synod or the assembly pages.

B7.11. Except for items introduced by the Committees on Reference and Counsel or items previously tabled, items of business which are not on the agenda may be introduced on the last day of the assembly only by a two-thirds vote.

Program

B7.12. Holy Communion shall be administered at each regular synod assembly.

B7.13. All appointments for the conduct of general religious services or public meetings shall be made by the bishop.

B7.14. The secretary shall post on the synod web site the bulletin of reports to all pastors and voting members-elect at least ten days before each regular Synod Assembly.

Procedures

B7.15. The report of the bishop to each regular synod assembly shall be referred to the Committee on the Bishop's Report, which shall study the same, make the appropriate comment thereon and transmit to the assembly the recommendations of the bishop together with any additional relevant recommendations of its own that it may deem desirable.

B7.16. A resolution of a general character which is not germane to the pending question or report shall be given by the proposer to a Committee of Reference and Counsel, which shall report thereon to the assembly with its recommendations. Other duties of the committee shall be (a) to recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives, (b) to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary and (c) to give such assistance to the bishop as may be desired in the course of the assembly.

B7.17. All reports published in the bulletin of reports shall be received by the assembly by virtue of that fact without vote.

B7.18. Voting members shall not absent themselves from any meeting of the assembly without valid excuse.

Section VIII

B8.01. If the vice-president is unable to or recuses his/her prerogative to serve as an *ex officio* voting member of the Churchwide Assembly, an alternate lay person of the same gender, meeting all other requirements, may be credentialed by the authority empowered to do so under the governing documents of the of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section IX

Nominations and Elections

B9.02 Ninety days prior to the Synod Assembly, the Nominating Committee shall send a list of the offices and positions to be filled by election and a list of positions to be filled by appointment to the pastors of the Synod and to the presidents/vice presidents of the congregational councils and to the Conference officers and shall invite nominations for these offices and positions.

B9.03 Nominations by pastors and congregational councils, along with the necessary vita information, requested by the Nominating Committee, shall be sent to the Nominating Committee within thirty days.

B9.04 The Nominating Committee shall nominate a minimum of two persons for each office and position to be filled by election.

B9.05 A slate of nominees and their vita sheets will be shared in the pre-assembly web site based materials. These will be available at least ten days prior to the assembly.

B9.06 The Nominating Committee shall suggest to the Synod Council one nominee for each position to be filled by appointment. The Synod Council will make necessary appointments after its meeting held during the Synod Assembly.

B9.07 In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the Bishop, additional nominations may be made from the floor.

B9.08 Members of the Synod Assembly who desire to make nominations from the floor shall have prepared beforehand and be ready to distribute copies of vita information sheets, similar to those provided earlier by the Nominating Committee for those nominees.

B9.09 All terms of office, except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws of the Synod, shall begin September 1 following election.

Section X

Synod Council

B10.01. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod, four pastors, six lay members, and as many designated youth and young adult members as are needed to meet the requirements of †S.10.01 and ELCA Constitution 5.01(g).

(a) Four pastors shall be elected, one from each of the four conferences.

(b) Six lay members shall be elected, one from each of the four conferences and two members at large. As far as possible, 50% of the lay members shall be male and 50% shall be female.

(c) The youth members shall be elected at large. Each youth member not have reached the age of 18 at the time of election.

(d) The young adult members shall be elected at large. Each young adult member shall be between (and inclusive of) the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election.

(e) When composition of the Synod Council, following any regular Synod Assembly, does not meet the requirements of †S.10.01, the Synod Council shall create and appoint such other seats as are necessary to comply.

B10.02. Terms of office:

(a) Four pastors and six lay members shall be elected for a three-year term, and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

(b) Each youth member shall be elected to a one-year term.

B10.03. The Synod Council shall meet at least three times a year. Any additional meeting(s) shall be as the council deems necessary.

B10.04. The president of the synodical women's organization or her appointee will serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice, but without vote.

B10.05. The Synod Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the officers and three members of the council (1 pastor, 2 lay members) elected by the council. The Executive Committee shall counsel with the officers and shall perform those functions of the Synod Council assigned to it by the Synod Council. The Executive Committee, with the exception of the bishop of this synod, shall review the work of the bishop, assistants to the bishop and support staff of the synod and shall recommend salaries and benefits for the bishop, assistants to the bishop and support staff of the synod.

B10.06. From within its membership, and also including other members of the synod as it desires, the Synod Council shall appoint a Mutual Ministry Committee. The committee shall seek to give encouragement by its concern for the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of the synod bishop and of assistants to the bishop. It will offer support when they are experiencing personal or pastoral stress. It will allow for open communication concerning attitudes and conditions within this synod.

B10.07. From within its membership, and also including other members of the synod as it desires, the Synod Council shall appoint a Budget and Finance Committee.

B10.08. From within its membership, and also including other members of the synod as it desires, the Synod Council shall appoint a Property Committee.

Section XI

Committees, Commissions and Other Organization Units

B11.01. There shall be a Consultation Committee consisting of twelve (12) persons, of whom three (6) shall be ordained ministers and three (6) shall be laypersons, who shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six (6) years without consecutive reelection. The bishop of the synod shall be a member of the Consultation Committee ex-officio except in instances when the bishop brings charges against an ordained minister. The responsibilities and procedures of this committee shall be those outlined in Chapter 20 of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

B11.02. There shall be a Committee on Discipline which shall be composed of twelve (12) persons, of whom six (6) shall be ordained ministers and six (6) shall be laypersons, who shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six (6) years without consecutive reelection. The bishop shall not be a member of the Committee

on Discipline. The responsibilities and procedures of this committee shall be those outlined in Chapter 20 of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

B11.03. There shall be a Professional Candidacy Committee to provide for the professional leadership recruitment preparation and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies and to certify candidates for the ordained ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church. This committee shall have six (6) members, four (4) laypersons and two (2) ordained ministers, appointed for a term of six (6) years. The terms of those initially appointed shall be staggered so that not all terms will expire at the same time.

B11.07. There shall be such operational committees as deemed necessary by this synod to guide and support the ministry of the synod and its congregations in the various aspects of the Church's mission. Such committees shall normally be created or disbanded by continuing resolution of the Synod Council, but nothing herein shall preclude the right of the Synod Assembly to create or disband such operational committees by either continuing resolution or bylaw.

B11.11. The Synod Council shall appoint the chairpersons of committees and commissions from among the membership of the committees and commissions.

B11.12. Vacancies upon committees, commissions and boards shall be filled by the Synod Council. Vacancies may occur through resignations, death or by a chairperson declaring a vacancy upon a committee, commission or board after two unexcused absences by a member.

B11.14. The synodical women's organizational president or her appointee will serve as the representative of the synodical women's organization to the Synod Council and will report to the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly.

B11.15. The synod bishop or the bishop's appointee will serve as the representative of the synod to the synodical women's organization and will provide reports to the board meetings and conventions of the synodical women's organization.

B11.16. The Synod Council shall appoint the Synod's representatives to the West Virginia Council of Churches. Each appointment shall be for a two-year term. The West Virginia Council of Churches shall indicate how many representatives shall be appointed.

Section XII

Conferences, Clusters and Coalitions

Designations

B12.01. There shall be four conferences designated as follows:

A. Monongahela Valley - Mountain Conference (17 congregations)

1. Bittinger MD, Emmanuel
2. Jennings MD, Zion
3. Swanton MD, St. John's (Meadow Mountain)
4. Clarksburg WV, St. Mark
5. Davis WV, St. John
6. Elkins WV, Holy Trinity
7. Fairmont WV, Grace
8. Grafton WV, Church of the Covenant
9. McHenry MD, Shepherd of the Hills
10. Morgantown WV, St. Paul
11. New Milton WV, St. Johannes
12. Oakland MD, St. Mark's

Accident Parish (the following three congregations)

13. Accident MD, St. Paul's
14. Accident MD, St. John's (Cove)
15. Friendsville MD, Grace

Aurora-Red House Parish (the following two congregations)

16. Aurora WV, St. Paul
17. Red House MD, St. John's

B. Ohio - Kanawha Valley Conference (12 congregations)

1. Beckley WV, St. Luke
2. Charleston WV, St. Paul
3. Huntington WV, Christ the King
4. Huntington WV, St. Paul
5. Hurricane, WV, Cross of Grace
6. Letart WV, St Mark (Upper Flats)
7. New Haven WV, St. Paul
8. Point Pleasant WV, St. Peter
9. Ravenswood WV, Our Saviour
10. Parkersburg WV, First
11. Vienna WV, Christ

C. Potomac Conference (22 Congregations)

1. Martinsburg WV, St. John
2. Martinsburg WV, Trinity
3. Charles Town WV, St Thomas
4. Harpers Ferry WV, St John
5. Sharpsburg MD, Holy Trinity Memorial Evangelical
6. Bakersville MD, Salem Evangelical
7. Petersburg WV, Grace
8. Baker WV, Zion
9. Moorefield WV, Mt. Olive (Peru)

Capon-North River Parish (the following four congregations)

10. Gore VA, Fairview
11. Rio WV, Ebenezer
12. Wardensville WV, St. Peter
13. Yellow Spring WV, Hebron

Mountain Lutheran Parish (the following five congregations)

14. Franklin WV, Faith
15. Minnehaha Springs WV, New Hope
16. Moyers WV, St. John
17. Upper Tract WV, Mt. Hope
18. Brandywine WV, Calvary

Keyser-Westernport Shared Ministry (the following two congregations)

19. Keyser WV, Trinity
20. Westernport MD, Mt. Calvary

Shepherdstown Lutheran Parish (the following two congregations)

21. Shepherdstown WV, St. Peter
22. Uvilla WV, St. James

D. Upper Ohio Valley Conference (12 Congregations - 10 Pastorates)

1. Wheeling WV, First English
2. Wheeling WV, Christ (Mozart)
3. Wheeling WV, Grace
4. Wheeling WV, St. James
5. Wheeling WV, St. Mark (Elm Grove)
6. Weirton WV, Trinity

St. Matthew-Trinity Shared Ministry (the following two congregations)

7. Wheeling WV, St. Matthew (Benwood)
8. Wheeling WV, Trinity

Moundsville - New Martinsville Shared Ministry (the following two congregations)

9. Moundsville WV, Messiah
10. New Martinsville WV, Good Shepherd

Compositions and Functions

B12.02. Purpose: The conferences shall exist for the purpose of fostering interdependent relationships among congregations, institutions, synodical and churchwide units, and adjacent groups in neighboring synods.

B12.03. Conference Polity: The Synod Council shall establish the governing structure of each conference through continuing resolutions.

B12.04. Deans: Deans will be appointed by the bishop in consultation with the pastors of the conference and reviewed annually. Deans are extensions of the bishop and his office in the local setting. The bishop shall consult with the church council(s) of a dean to negotiate specific time for the dean to devote to his/her duties, with a recommendation minimum of one day per month. Deans will not be paid for the performance of their duties, but expenses will be reimbursed by the synod. A dean's primary duty will be to assist the bishop in providing pastoral care to pastors and congregations.

B12.05. Presbyterial Collegiality: The pastors and the dean of each conference will develop methods for promoting collegiality.

B12.06. Clusters: Clusters of congregations may be established, as needed, to further support and to inter-relate ministries of local congregations. Clustering of congregations shall not be limited to geographic proximity. Clustering of congregations could be determined by size, by single or multiple church parishes, the setting of congregations for ministry and other factors that would foster such relationships. Clusters may continue as long as needs exist. Clusters of congregations may not be limited by conference or synodical boundaries.

Section XIII

Reserved for future use.

Section XIV

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Section XV

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Section XVI

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Section XVII

Reserved for future use.

**Continuing Resolutions
of the
West Virginia--Western Maryland Synod
(as amended by Synod Council on 30 March 2019)**

CR 1.01. When the election of the Synodical Bishop occurs during a regular synod assembly, the agenda shall include the following:

- a. distribution of biographical information for each candidate prior to the third ballot;
- b. questioning of each candidate prior to the third ballot, the questions being generated by the conferences and vetted by the synod council; and
- c. a teaching period by each candidate prior to the fourth ballot.¹

CR 2.01 An ordained minister on leave from call on the roster of this synod shall be granted voting membership in the Synod Assembly upon the consent of the Synod Council; such consent shall be applicable to the Synod Assembly in question; such consent may be renewed.

CR 2.02. Prior to each Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall consider and, at its discretion, seat with voice and vote in the immediate Synod Assembly those Ministers of Word & Sacrament (or the equivalent) who are serving synod congregations and who also belong to church bodies with which the ELCA has full-communion.²

CR 2.03 Prior to each Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall consider and, at its discretion, seat with voice but without vote in the immediate Synod Assembly to those Ministers of Word & Sacrament (or the equivalent) who are serving a synod congregation but have not been otherwise enfranchised.³

CR 3.01. When there is a disagreement among people or factions within a congregation, as related to †S17.11 of the West Virginia - Western Maryland Synod Constitution, and the Consultation Committee is called in to consider the matter, the Committee shall deliver, in writing, a report to the congregation, within 60 days of the receipt, by the chair of the Committee, of the request for assistance.⁴

CR 3.02. If the Consultation Committee thinks it will be unable to finish the report within 60 days, the Committee must contact the synodical bishop as soon as possible to request extra time, up to 30 days, for a total of no more than 90 days from the receipt of the request for assistance, to finish the report. The exact amount of extra time is granted at the bishop's discretion and can be denied.⁵

CR 3.03. The synodical bishop, after being contacted by the Consultation Committee for a request for more time, has the right to grant, refuse, or amend the request based on his or her assessment of the situation and the work of the Committee.⁶

CR 4.0 -- VOTED SC19.3.3: The Council approved to authorize the bishop, vice-president, and secretary to approve the minutes after each session.⁷

¹ SA14

² SC19.3.10.

³ SC19.3.12.

⁴ SC19.1.17.

⁵ SC19.1.17

⁶ SC19.1.17

⁷ SC19.3.3.